

Tolkappiyam and Manu Smriti – A Comparative study

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1. **Introduction:** Tolkappiyam is the ancient Tamil work attributed to Tolkappiyar. Though, it is a grammatical treatise, it deals with the lives of ancient Tamils providing interesting details about their social processes and interactions, culminating in a civilized society. Manu Smriti based on Dharmasutra of Manasvas codifies the governing the ancient Indian society. Though, it is attributed to a Manu, the traditional law giver, its original authorship is not known. This comparative study is restricted to Porulathikaram of Tolkappiyam with Manu Smriti, without importing laterday hypotheses and theories. Drawing parallels, society, divisions of society, professional groups, each group's identity, religion, rituals and other connected topics are considered.

2. **The Division of land:** the five-fold division of land into Kurinchi, Mullai, Marudham, Neydhal and Palai is a unique one, according to Tolkappiyam, consistent with the origin of Universe. A closer study of these Tinai (land divisions) proves the fact. If we prepare a table with the respective people, their chieftains, Uriporul (theme on which songs are composed for a particular land), food, animals, birds, plants, occupation, musical instruments, pan (harmonical note), god, season, and geographical features with the five natural elements, one can appreciate how such division is consistent with the "Panchbhuta tatva" (the philosophy of Five Natural Elements). According to this, the sequential origin of natural elements with the increasing qualities are as follows:

1. ether with the quality of sound;
2. wind from ether (akasa) with the qualities of sound and tangibility;
3. fire from wind with the added quality of sight;
4. water from fire with the added quality of taste; and
5. finally earth from the water with all the five qualities of sound, tangibility, sight, taste and smell (Manu. I-20).

2.1. **The Mythological Coincidence:** The order of the tinai with the respective gods designated and fauna coincide with their respective Puranic description as noted below:

Tinai	God	Popular name	Vahana	Element
Kurinchi	Seyon	Murugan	Perocock	Earth

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Mullaiu	Mayon	Tirumal	kite (Garuda)	Water
Marudham	Vendan	Indran / Agni	Elephant / Ram	Fire
Neydhal	Varunan	Varunan	Swan	Wind
Palai	Kotravai	Sakti	Lion	Ether

The cyclic nature of creation, preservation and destruction of universe can also be noted to appreciate. Murugan is the son of Sakti (Parvathi) and the connecting elements are earth and ether. Tirumal (Vishnu) is born from the waters (Narayana). If Vendan can be equated either with Indra or Agni, the element fire coincides with him. Wind is connected with Varuna, the Sea-god. The respective Uripporl – kudal (union), iruttal (staying), udal (feign), engal (pining/loving) and piridal (separation) not only coincide with the human life of action, but also consistent with the above principle (Porul. Agattinaiyial. 6-12).

Tinai	Season	Action	Time
Kurinchi – mullai	Autumn	kudal (union)	Yamam (mid-night)
Mullaiu – Marudham	Winter	iruttal (staying)	Malai (evening)
Marudham – Neydhal	Spring	udal (feign)	Vaigarai (dawn)
Neydhal – Palai	Summer	engal (pining/loving)	Erpadu (Sunset)
		piridal (separation)	Pagal (day)

This explains the scientific nature of division of land according to the psychological needs of the human beings. Thus, the five natural regions – hills and surrounded areas (Kurinchi); the wooded land between the highlands and lowlands (Mullai), the lower courses of rivers (Marudham), the littoral tracts near sea (neydhal) and dry waterless areas (Palai) is in accordance with the changing world and the man who lives there.

3. **Division of People:** After the description of the division of the land, the continuing sutras 22 to 37 vividly give the details about the division of people according to tinai, their respective duties and avocations. For each tinai, the changed names of tinai (are applicable to the people) are two kinds based on names of clan (kulappeyar) and profession (tozhirpeyar) [22]. Tinai names for males and females are formed as Ayar (shepherd) and Vettuvai (hunters) and there are chiefs (kizhars) for them (23). Similarly, if we analyze the people of other regions, we can observe that the names of clan and profession are applied to each tinai (24). Kakkilai (one sided love) and peruntinai (unequal love) are applicable to adiyor (servants) and vinaivalar (workers) and they are dealt with (in literature accordingly) [25]. The above mentioned servants and workers and enor (others), who are in the position of commanding (or being commanded) are

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also in the same state (26), i.e, kakkilai and peruntinai are applicable to adiyor, vinaivalar and enor. Thus, the discussion about the seven tinai about the union of man and woman under 1 . kakkilai, 2. mullai, 3. kurunji, 4. marudham, 5. neydhai, 6. palai (aintinai) and 7. peruntinai. As kalavu (love in secret) and karpu (love in open) occur in the regions of mullai, kurunji, marudham and neydhai, then palai, i.e, separation is discussed about. As has been already mentioned, each tinai represents the activities of man and woman who live there. Tolkappiyar adapts and adopts the palai as an activating agent in the social processes and interactions of the ancient Tamils. Thus, it is said that education (othai), war or enmity (pagai) and tuthu (diplomacy) are the reasons for separation taking place in life (from the family, lover or wife) [27]. Of the above-mentioned categories, the separation due to education and diplomacy is applicable to uyarntor i.e, the people at the top or eminent people (among the four categories). The commentator Ilamburanar specifically mentions that it is applicable to andanar (Brahmins) and arasar (Kings). Nachinarkkiniyar, another commentator says that velalars (agriculturists and others) are excluded (it is implied) as uyarntor is mentioned (28). King can go for war on his own accord or with others (resulting in separation) [29]. Here, the expression vendan specifically refers to king i.e, arasar (apart from the above mentioned three exigencies learning, war and diplomacy) separation takes place for earning wealth and establishing righteousness among the people of mullai (kurunji, marudham and neydhai), so that rituals are conducted to people of other than that of eminence, greatness and exaltation (30). The people, thus who earn money or wealth may be called vanigar (business men). Ilamburanar says that the people other than that of eminence are nothing but devar (= gods), for them pujas and festivals are conducted. The expression padimai may refer to idol of such devar. Thus, the separation for the above exigency (i.e, to establish procedure relating to gods) is applicable to all four categories (31). Ilamburanar specifically mentions that the four categories are the four varnas. Here, Nachinarkkiniyar explained succinctly the difference between enor (others) and nalver (four group of people). As it is mentioned that nalvarkkum uritte (applicable to four kinds of people), it is evident that besides vanigar as mentioned above, two categories or vellalars are also included. The duties of king can be performed by 'pinnor' (i.e, vanigar and vellalar), who follow him in the order). The duties of king includes guarding, protection and preservation. As the expression 'Mannar pinnor' denotes plural, it includes other kings, agriculturists (Velalar) and the like (32). For the higher group of the above mentioned authorized two (i.e, vanigar and vellalar), a separation can take place for the purpose of learning / education (33). The above mentioned authorized two groups can perform duties for kings are vanigar and vellalar of which the higher group is Vanigar. Therefore, it is evident that vanigar can also go for studying (othu). Arasar has already been permitted under sutra 28. therefore, for andanar, arasar and vanigar separation can take place for learning. Nachinarkkiniyar explains that as the place of Othu (learning) takes place after the appearance of Vedas, it is mentioned 'vothinan' (othu refers to Vedas).

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3.1. The duties of Vendar (king) can be performed by those other than king also, where admissible (34). The duty of king is mentioned as diplomacy by the commentator instead of popular meaning ruling / governance. Thus, it is implied that the act of diplomacy is applicable to Vanigar and Vellalar in other words, applicable to all four categories. Some say enor (others) denotes chieftains. The act of separation is a privilege for them (i.e, vanigar and Vellalar) in connection with wealth (i.e, to earn wealth by trade and commerce) [35]. If uyarntor have separation for earning wealth, then that amounts to going away from good conduct or moral values (36). Though specifically the word Andanar or any other expression is not used to denote Brahmins, from the forgoing sutras and their implied conditions and restrictions imposed on the repeatedly mentioned – four groups of people read with the commentaries of Ilamburanar, Perasiriyar and Nachinarkkiniyar, it is evident that Uyarntor here must refer to Andanar i.e, the higher group of the people of society. As has been authorized here among the two causes for separation, i.e, separation by leg (kalir pirivu) and separation by ship (kalattir pirivu) the separation due to ship is not allowed along with the lover or wife (37). Munnir vazhakkam is going by waters of rivers, spring and ocean respectively for education, diplomacy and business or trade. This implies that not only women are prohibited for undertaking voyage, but also Andanar as they are also not supposed to yearn for money or wealth.

4. **Four Divisions of Society:** Under the sutra 74 of Tolkappiyam, four divisions of society is mentioned by way of describing their duties. The duties of Parppanar have been divided into six; that of Arasar into five; that of Enor into six; the region of learned who discharges their duties according to established times of past, future and present. For ascetics there are eight duties; for porunar, the duties are connected with warfare; and other duties connected with the above are meant for others; thus the vagaitinai is divided into seven categories by the poets, they say so. The previous verse / sutra 73 clearly says that vagai is just like 'puram' of 'palai' i.e, subject dealing with the aspects of life other than love of the exigencies created during separation for performing their respective duties. Accordingly, one has to improve their avocation and skill with great distinction without hindrance to others. Therefore each can excel in his / her field / profession / avocation according to their skill, ability and talent. This four divisions and the respective duties mentioned described are exactly in accordance with the laws of Manu. Though Tolkappiyar has not mentioned the nature of duties, as the numbers of duties have been specifically mentioned, they can be understood by the contemporary ancient Tamil literature, popularly known as Sangam literature.

4.1. Thus, the six duties of Parppanar are studying (of Vedas), teaching (of Vedas), conducting sacrificial yagnas for themselves and for others; giving and taking alms. The duties of Arasar are studying (of Vedas), conducting yagnas, giving alms, training in arms and protecting citizens. The duties of Enor (others) are studying, conducting yagnas, giving alms, agriculture, commerce and protecting cattle. The duties of Arivar are following disciplined life in all three periods of past, present and future according to the arising exigencies. The duties

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of Ascetics are bathing, sleeping on the floor, dressing with naturally available materials, growing and keeping hair, keeping sacrificial fires, not mixing with people of worldly pleasures, eating naturally available food, praying God and treating guests. The duties of 'Virar' are connected with the aspects of warfare arms etc. the duties of each category of people is very similar to the four divisions of society as described by Manu. This indirectly implies the four ashramas of life according to him.

5. Marriage: Karpiyal sutras explain about the concept of Karpu, marriage and introduction of sacraments. Karpu (chastity) is defined as the union of man of tradition to accept a woman of equal tradition to be offered (for marriage) with karanam (sacrament). 'Karpu' is thus understood as the union of man and woman with the acceptance of the respective parents with sacraments in contrary to 'kalavu (i.e, union in secret)[140]. There was a time, even where elopement took place, the ceremonial union or Karanam was made mandatory or effected to regularize (141). There was a time when the Karanam applicable for the three higher categories (Melor) was made applicable to lower category also (Kizhor), i.e, 'Karanam' was prevalent among all the four categories., then, it was not practiced by the last one (142). Therefore, after the appearance of falsehood and immorality, Aiyer introduced Karanam i.e, the most elaborate ceremonies of marriage (143). Karanam was held in conformity with tradition (144).

5.1. The Matching Factors for Man and Woman: Tolkappiyam mentions ten matching factors to be observed for marriage as follows (Meipattiyal – 269):

1. Pirappu – Birth (Natvity).
2. Kudimai – Discipline (Family trait).
3. Anmai - Manliness (Strength).
4. Andu – Age.
5. Uruvu – Beauty (the means of enjoying life).
6. Kamavayil – Love (Chastity).
7. Nirai – Patience (humbleness).
8. Arul – mercy (compassion).
9. Unarvu – knowledge (understanding) and
10. Tiru – wealth.

In an earlier sutra, the eight forms of marriages are mentioned (89) and they are:

1. Brahma.
2. Daiva.
3. Arsha.
4. Prajapatya.
5. Asura.
6. Gandharva.
7. Rakshasa. And
8. Paisaca.

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Considering the climatic nature of the divisions of land and the psychological nature of people, who live there, these eight forms of marriages can be equated with Kakkilai (one sided love), 2. Intinai (perfect love) and Peruntinai (unequal love).

6. **A Note on Sacraments:** Manusmriti give the list of sacraments performed by the people of ancient India. They are:

1. Garbadhana (sacrament of Impregnation).
2. Punsavana (the ceremony of procreating vigorous child).
3. Simantonayana (ceremony for keeping the mind of pregnant woman satisfied – parting of hair etc).
4. Jatakarma (ceremony of the newly born child).
5. Namakarna (ceremony of naming the child).
6. Annaprashna (ceremony of giving solid or cereal food to the child).
7. Chudakarna (tonsure and ceremony of tuft).
8. Upanayana (sacred thread ceremony).
9. Samavartana (returning to home after studies).
10. Vivaha (sacrament of marriage).

Interestingly, in Tolkappiyam also, we find similar sacraments performed, as noted below:

Under the Karpiyal sutra (185), it is mentioned that the poets say that husband should not be away from his wife during the twelve days after the menstrual period, even if he were in the midst of parattaiyar (prostitutes). Nachinarkkiniyar comments that the twelve days might be six days before and six days after the period of menstruation. Some scholars say (according one interpretation) that husband can have union with wife after the period of menstruation. Some scholars say (according to another interpretation) that husband can have union with wife after date of menstruation i.e, from fourth day onwards for twelve days. This is exactly with the prescription of Manu. He says that the best mating period is sixteen days from the date of menstruation, with the condition that the first four days should be avoided (III-46). Again in another sutra (Kalaviyal – 185), it is mentioned that the union in Kalaviyal (love in secret) occurs all the days except the three days (of menstruation). Even in those days mating may not be prohibited,. Achinarkkiniyar comments that this rule is meant for Arasar, Vanigar, Vellalar, Ayar, Vettuvār wtc., but not for Andanar. Reading with sutra 185 of Karpiyal, it is evident that the three days are to be avoided. Many specifically says that husband should be his married wife during the menstrual period except the three days (III – 45). In the following verse (III – 46), as has been pointed out that the first four days of sixteen days from the date of menstruation should be avoided. Again he repeats the point under the next chapter on domestic life (IV – 40), but this is specifically for Brahmins (Andanar). Therefore, the commentator's reference seems to be consistent with Tolkappiyam. The sutra 144 describes about a ceremony performed at the time of delivery of a child named “Neyyani mayakkam”. He says that the husband joins

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her after finishing the ceremony of taking oil bath. The interior of the house is applied with the paste of ghee mixed with white mustard seeds. The next sutra 145 explains about a woman, who has just delivered a baby and is ready for the ceremony, but she does not want her husband to join (though his presence is necessary).

6.1. Under Purattitinaiyiyal sutras, the last rites to be performed to the dead have been detailed. For the preparation of Nadukal, six steps have been prescribed (Porul – 60):

1. Selection of stone
2. Chiseling
3. Immersion in water.
4. Erecting
5. Engraving.
6. Paying homage.

Surprisingly, this is very similar to the last rite conducted by Brahmins and non-Brahmins on the 10th day for the dead. The ceremony contains the following steps:

1. Selection of stone.
2. Cleaning with water, milk etc.
3. Seating on darpa grass etc.,
4. Pashans stapana (stone fixing – one at house and another on the banks of river).
5. Invoking spirits to enter and take offerings.
6. Vasthothakam - raising cloth over it etc.

Another sutra (65) mentions about the offering of rice-balls (Panda meya Perucjoru nilai). The offering of Pinda i.e, rice-balls for the dead is part of the ceremony conducted for the dead. Though all the ten sacraments as mentioned by Manu are not sequentially described, but they are sufficiently mentioned at different places in Tolkappiyam, a has been compared above.

7. **Authorship of the Work:** the authorship of Tolkappiyam and Manusmriti is not known but only attributed to personalities with the names derived from their respective works or connected with the works. Thus, the author of Tolkappiyam is known as Tolkappiyar and that of Manusmriti Manu. And both works have great impact on Indian society even today affecting the social processes and thinking processes of decision takers and opinion makers. Many times, scholars have accused of the authors for their attempted imposition of invading culture by introducing new elements in the lives of people.

8. **Interpolations:** both works are found at fault for containing interpolations in dealing with social processes. Some scholars accused the author of Tolkappiyam for introducing Vedic or Brahmanic practices in Tamil society. Some other scholars assert that wherever there are references about Vedic or Brahmanic,

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they are interpolations made by the vested scholars / poets. Similarly, the author of Manusmriti is accused of treating other people with discrimination in contrast with the Brahmins. Some scholars assert (including Buhler) that there are contradictions in the verses dealing with the status under treatment of others, definitely, such verses are interpolations made by the laterday scholars to suit their interests. However, the surprising point is that the details conveyed through such verses are coinciding with each other in both works. When and how such coinciding interpolations were made, who had made such interpolations, whether they were scholars of both Tamil and Sanskrit and such other questions are posed for researchers for further quest. Whether they were interpolated in the same period or otherwise and what purpose are also other important questions to be studied.

9. The Date of the Works: As the name of the author is not known, the date of the work is also not definitely known due to various issues and problems. The date of Tolkappiyam is fixed and varied according to the following factors:

1. Kayavagu synchronism.
2. References about Sanskrit works.
3. Vedic practices and
4. Mention of 'Hora'.

Thus, its date varies from 1500 BCE to 7th century CE. Similarly Manusmriti is placed between the same periods. The only difference is that while Sanskrit works are compared with the former for fixing the date, while non-Sanskrit and non-India works are compared for deciding the date of latter.

10. Conclusion: The uniqueness of each work with exhibited similarities can easily be noted and appreciated, and they are not mere coincidence. Though, some scholars argue that "Tolkappiyam" itself was "Aryanized" or the Tamil society "Aryanized," such process could not have been possible, as perceived by them. Moreover, that the imposing people could succeed, exactly like this and they could find parallels so easily without any dissimilarities or dissensions, is also impossible. In spite of force or other such methods applied, it is difficult to make people to accept culture, heritage, tradition and civilization of others. And if the factors cannot match or acceptable, there cannot be any underlying unity among the people lived.

The Tamizhagam is situated in Southern part of India / Bharat / Jambudwipam and in Tamil literature, the southern direction has always been considered sacred. Though, based on Sanskrit literature, much differentiation has been made between Tamil and Sanskrit, non-Brahmins, Dravidians and Aryans and so on, the link or unity between them has been striking and it cannot be just "Aryanization of Dravidians" or "Dravidianization of Aryans". Had the South been always against Sanskrit and Bramins, it could have produced Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhwa, who are followed throughout the country without any differentiation. The much maligned "Manu" himself would not have been

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mentioned as “Dravidian King.” The Brahmin Chanakya would not have gone to Chandragupta Maurya to make him an Emperor or later come to south to die facing “North.”

Thus, the comparative study of Tolkappiyam and Manusmriti gives many interesting details about the ancient Indians and Tamils with many similarities. As both works appear to belong to the same period, a deeper study on these lines may solve other historical riddles.

A Comparative tale giving parallel verses from Tolkappiyam and Manu Smriti and the connected subject matter.

Tol-kappya m	Manu Smriti	Subject
2	1 – 5	World was surrounded by waters
22	I-21	Division of land according to clan and profession
23	IV-61; V-22, 24, 44	There are chiefs / kings among Ayar, Vettuvār
24	I-21	Applicability of Tinai name to each group
25	II	Applicability of marriage, literature to Adiyar and Vinaivalar according to their position.
26	II	Applicability to Enor (Others)
27	IV, VII, VIII, X	Duties of education, war and diplomacy
28	III-156, IV-99, X-127	Education restricted to Vuyarnthor
29	VIII	War for kings
30	I-90	Earning wealth, performance of festivals for Vanigar
31	X	Applicability of duties of Melor (people at top) to all four categories.
32	X	Duties of Mannar (kings) can be performed by Pennor (next to kings) i.e, Vanigar and Vellalar.
33	Ii-209, 238, 240, 241, 242	Education may be applicable to Vanigar and Vellalar also.
34	Do	Duties of kings can be performed by others.
35	IX – 325-336.	Earning wealth is applicable to Vanigar and Vellalar.
36	IV – 2-8, X – 93	If Uyarntor go for earning, they would be degraded.
37	IX-74	Sea-voyage is not performed with the ladies
65	III-122, 214- 218.	Offering of Pindas to dead.
74	X-75	Six duties of Andanar
74	X-77	Kings can perform some of the duties of Andanar
74	X-78	Vaisyas can also perform the duties like giving and

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		taking alms performing Yagnas.
74, 28	X-1, !-88	Six duties of Andanar
74, 622	I-89	Duties of Kings
74, 622	I-90	Duties of Vaisyas
74, 629	I-91	Duties of Sudras / workers
89	III-20	Eight forms of marriage
89	III-21	Brahma, Daiva, Arsha, Prajapatya, Asura, Gandharva, Rakshsa, Paisaca
89	III-23, 24	Eight forms explained
90	III – 5-11	Matching of bride and groom
635	I-6	Creation of world and people due to Panchabhutatatva.
635	I-15	Relation between Panchabhutas.
635	I-18	Relation to Panchabhutas.
635	I-19	Combination of Panchabhutas.
635	I-20	Origin of space, sound, ether, water and earth
635	I-21	Creation of life, the respective names, movements and profession according to such five division.
615	IV-36	Symbols of Ananar
120	III-120	Mating with wife
185	III-46	When should mate avoiding three days of menstrual period.
140	III – 5-11, IX-88-92,	Right of giving and taking bride
141	IX-90	Right to marry even without offer of marriage (elopement).
142	II – 26-36, III-4	Marriage ceremonies applicable to all
143		Introduction of Karanams
144	I-31	Performance of Karanam in accordance with tradition
4	I-31	Division of society, duties etc
28	I-103	Vedas can only be read by Brahmins, and not by others.